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Pacific
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Region

Record of Decision

for the Land and Resource Management Plan

Lassen National Forest

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RECORD OF DECISION

Final Environmental Impact Statement and Land and Resource Management Plan

1993

Lassen National Forest
USDA - Forest Service

Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama Counties, California

Abstract: This document presents my decision for the selection of a Land and Resource Management Plan for the Lassen National Forest. It summarizes my reason for choosing the PRF Alternative as the basis for the Forest Plan which will be followed for the next 10 to 15 years, unless amended sooner. Estimates for the long-term environmental, social and economic consequences contained in the Final Envuonmental Impact Statement were considered in my decision

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Lassen National Forest
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Located Within
Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou and Tehama Counties, California

The Forest Service has completed a detailed planning process including studies of the lands, resources, and the socio-economic interest in this National Forest as well as a detailed study and analysis of many different alternatives for management. Four of these alternatives were analyzed and displayed in detail in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Lassen National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (the Forest Plan).

This Record of Decision documents my selection and approval of one of these alternatives. The alternative is descnbed in detail in the Forest Plan

I. THE DECISION

A. Preferred Alternative

Based on a thorough study of the resources of 1.1 million acres of the Lassen National Forest (the Forest), analysis of alternatives, and renew of public comments on the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS and FEIS) and draft and final proposed Forest Plans, I have selected the PRF Alternative to provide direction for management of the Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. The PRF Alternative was also the Preferred Alternative disclosed in the DEIS (March 1986). It was modified in the FEIS in response to public comment and changmg national/regional management direction. Additional modifications as a result of comments on the FEIS and proposed final Plan are noted in this Record of Decision and in the "Response to Comments." This Record of Decision summarizes the principal management objectives of the Forest Plan and the rationale for my decision.

B. Decision Making Process

The FEIS and Forest Plan were developed under the implementing regulations of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219 (36 CFR 219) published in the Federal Register on July 1, 1988. The planning actions descnbed in 36 CFR 219.12(b) through (j) have been completed and are documented. Also followed were the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1500-1508 (40 CFR 1500-1508). In addition, the Forest Plan preparation was guided by the Regional Guide for the Pacific Southwest Region (1984) as well as many other laws and regulations.

Comments on the DEIS and draft Forest Plan (March 1986) were received in over 1,600 letters, postcards, presentations at oral hearings and other public input. Because of the numerous changes made between the release of the draft and final Plans, and the ensuing time period, issuance of this Record of Decision was delayed to allow for additional public participation. The FEIS and proposed final Plan were released August 10, 1992 for a 60 day comment period. Over 1,700 letters, postcards, and supporting documentation were received

I have reviewed the environmental consequences of the Forest Plan and the alternatives that are disclosed in the FEIS. I gave particular attention to public comments on the DEIS presented in Chapter 10 of the FEIS. I have also reviewed the public issues and management concerns identified dunng the scoping process for this Plan

(FEIS, Appendix A) and from the comments received on the FEIS and proposed final Plan ("Response to Comments")

II. THE FOREST PLAN

A. What the Plan Is and Is Not

As a long-range strategy for managing the Lassen National Forest, the Forest Plan and accompanying FEIS are programmatic in nature That is, the documents do not make project level decisions or site-specific environmental analyses. The Forest Plan provides management direction to produce goods, services, and uses in a way that maximizes long-term net public benefits It describes a broad management program, but not the individual activities that will carry out that program. It is not a plan for day-to-day administrative activities of the Forest; it does not addresssuchmatters as eqmpment management or workforce organization It does not describe the resource impacts or mitigative measures of a particular project.

Rather, the Forest Plan emphasizes the application of vanous management practices to achieve multiple-use goals and objectives in an environmentally sound and economically efficient manner. This is accomplished through the Standards and Guidelines, Management Prescriptions, and Management Area direction found in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan, and by monitoring discussed in Chapter 5. They are the rules or parameters under whch we will propose and evaluate individual projects through NEPA to implement the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, Management Prescriptions, and Management Area direction will not be waived in order to achieve another management objective Should a proposed project be inconsistent with the Plan, the project will be modified or the Plan will be amended.

The Forest Plan does not maximize any single resource use or public service It does not propose the use of any resource beyond the biological capability of the land to sustain that use Nor does it propose resource management based solely on values in the market place or the economic benefits those values provide.

It is important to note that the Goals and Objectives in the Forest Plan can be achieved from a physical, biological, economic, social, and legal perspective. However, just because the Goals and Objectives are achievable does not mean they can all be accomplished for at least for two reasons. First, outputs specified in the Plan are estimates and projections based on available inventory data and modeling assumptions As new data is obtained or assumptions are field tested, these onginal estimates may also change. Second, all actinties may be affected by annual Forest budgets. Budget allocations may cause projects to be rescheduled. If actual budgets are significantly different from those projected over a period of several years, the Forest Plan may have to be amended and, consequently, would reflect different outputs and environmental conditions. This will be determined as the Plan is implemented and monitored. Regardless of budgets, resource protection will be the first pnority.

B. Major Components of the Forest Plan

Successful Implementation of the Forest Plan requires an understanding of the followmg five sections in the Plan

1 *Forest Goals and Objectives* embody the desired future condition of the Forest, with each responding to an identified public issue or management concern. These Goals and Objectives are presented at the beginning of Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan The remainder of the Forest Plan's management direction is intended to attain these Goals and Objectives.

2. *Forest Standards and Guidelines, and Management Prescriptions* in Chapter 4 apply to the entire Forest They expand the Forest Goals and Objectives into more specific management direction for each resource Management Prescnptions identify the resource actinties to be emphasized on a particular land area.

3 *Management Areas for the Forest, and Management Area Standards and Guidelines* Forty-eight Areas are defined in Chapter 4 Management Area Standards and Gmdelines describe how the unique resources in each of these geographically distinct areas are to be managed.

4. *Monitoring and evaluation* requirements are listed in Chapter 5 of the Plan. They help

determine progress in achieving Plan Goals and Objectives and the effectiveness of our Standards and Guidelines

5 Appendices include a list of resource plans and their status, research and technical planning needs, and other supporting information for Forest Plan implementation

C. Some Major Provisions of the Forest Plan

The Forest Plan provides for the integrated management of timber, outdoor recreation, wildlife, fish, botamcal resources, watershed, forage, cultural resources, minerals, and wilderness that will result in a high-level, sustained-yleld of goods and services for the benefit of the American people.

Diversity

The Forest Plan includes several provisions to maintain plant and animal dwersity. These include mamtaining acreages of each successional stage of the major vegetation types in each management area, and preserving areas where natural forces determine diversity.

A minimum of five percent of the forested acres in each Management Area has been identified for old growth retention to protect those values unique to old growth ecosystems. Late successional stage vegetation is also present in wilderness, semi-primitive areas, visual retention areas, wildlife habitat, and proposed Wild and Scenic River comdors where limited or no timber harvesting is scheduled.

Special requirements for activities in and adjacent to nparian areas increase the degree of protection for riparian resources, and add to diversity.

The Forest Plan continues to protect the existing Cub Creek and Blacks Mountain Research Natural Areas (RNA's). Six additional areas, totaling 9,812 acres, are recommended to the Chief of the Forest Service for designation as RNA's and to be managed to preserve their natural condition for scientific study. These a r e s are: Graham Pinery, Green Island Lake, Indian Creek, Mayfield, Soda Ridge, and Timbered Crater. Until final decisions on their status are made, they will be managed in their natural condition.

Seven Special Interest Areas, totaling 2,335 acres, are established under 36 CFR 294 1(a). They will be kept in their natural condition for public enjoyment, and managed to protect the specific geologic, scenic, or botamcal features for which they were designated. The seven areas are: Black Rock, Crater Lake, Deep Hole, Homer/Deerheart, Montgomery Creek Grove, Murken Bench, and Willow Lake Bog.

The Plan includes several management techniques to maintain or improve diversity for early successional plant and animal species, such as prescribed fire

Facilities

Forest roads provide access for recreahonal enjoyment, for the movement of goods from National Forest lands, and for administrative purposes The Forest Plan estimates that 66 miles of roads will be constructed or reconstructed each year Actual mileage will be determined after project planning and envlronmental analysis. Emphasis in the Forest road program will be placed on preventing resource damage, and providing access for National Forest management achvlties and recreation use.

Fish

The Plan includes provisions to protect and enhance the fishery resource. This includes: 1) Standards and Guidehnes for fish, watershed, ripanan and streamside management zone (SMZ) protection; and 2) other provisions that reduce conflict between the maintenance and improvement of fisheries habitat and management of other resources. Fish habitat improvement projects are one component of Forest management that will be implemented to improve the fishery resource.

There are at least 29 species of fish, both native and introduced, known to occur on the Forest. The Forest's anadromous resource is regionally significant, including spring-run chinook salmon and winter-run steelhead. Presently, there are no fish species on the Forest that are federally listed as Threatened or Endangered.

Forest fish habitat includes approximately 350 miles of resident trout streams and 86 miles of existing and potential anadromous streams. In addihon, there are 108 lakes totaling 3,500 surface acres. Overall, habitat quality is rated medium-high and high for resident trout streams and anadromous streams, respectively

Basin-level fish habitat inventories will be conducted to evaluate current habitat conditions and fish species distribution and abundance Momtoring of fish populations, especially chmook salmon, will continue.

Grazing

The number of domestic livestock permitted to graze on the National Forest is expected to decline shghtly The emphasis of the range program will be on ecosystem management designed to brmg rangelands to a desired future condition Riparian area management will be a particularly important component of this emphasis. Allotment management planning, implementahon and momtoring that involves range permittees and other interested parties will be the medium used to acheve ecosystem management objectives.

Recreation

The Lassen National Forest provides a wide vanety of high quahty recreation opportumties. The Forest Plan places a strong emphasis on recreation. A comprehensive program of constructing and reconstructing campgrounds is directed, as is mamtaining and expanding the Forest trail system Most of the Forest is open to off-highway vehicles with no restrictions Portions of Antelope Creek, Mill Creek, and Deer Creek are recommended for Wild and Scenic River status.

The Plan includes recommending *to* Congress that two percent of the Forest, or 21,584 acres, be designated new wdderness. The recommended wilderness areas are Heart Lake, Mill Creek, and a portion of both Trail Lake B and Wild Cattle Mountain This would bring the total wilderness acreage to 99,644 acres, or nine percent of the Forest The Heart Lake and Wild Cattle Mountain areas are adjacent to the Lassen Volcanic National Park Wilderness, Trail Lake B is adjacent to the Caribou Wilderness, and Mill Creek is adjacent to the Ishi wilderness.

Wilderness recommendations are preliminary administrative recommendations that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation Therefore, these wilderness recommendations are not appealable under the agency's administrative appeal procedures

The remaining roadless areas are managed under a variety of non-wilderness prescriptions. The specific prescriptions and the acres to be managed under each prescription are &splayed in Appendix M of the FEIS. These prescnptions provide for motorized, non-motonzed, and primitive recreation along with mldlife habitat, visual quality, and timber harvest. The Butt Mountain roadless area is managed to preserve the opportunity for potential downhill ski area development

Riparian Areas

The Forest has over 12,000 acres of npanan areas including about 2,600 acres of perennial stream comdors, 3,700 acres of lakeshore and wetlands, and 4,300 acres of intermittent and ephemeral stream corridors

The Plan emphasizes maintenance and improvement of nparian areas Designation of streamside management zones (SMZ's) and the application of the Riparian/Fish Prescription ensures that these areas are managed for nparian-dependent resources includmg water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, water-associated aesthetics and nparian hardwoods.

Some actinties permitted in the npanan areas include limited timber management to maintain or enhance riparian values, livestock grazing compatible with protection of npanan-dependent resources, and limited recreational development.

Timber

The average allowable sale quantity (ASQ) in the Forest Plan is 96 million board feet (MMBF) per year ASQ is chargeable volume obtained from

lands determined to be suitable for timber production This does not include non-chargeable volume that could come from salvage sales on unsuitable acres or harvests to support research activlties wlthin the two Expenmental Forests on the Lassen.

Most of the issues raised dunng the planning process affect ASQ Some of these are conservation of spotted owl, marten, fisher and goshawk habitat, old growth retention, management of npanan and other special areas, proposed wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers, and reduced clearcuttmg. *All* of these factors have contributed to a decline in the amount of smtable land available for timber management whch then leads to a reduction in ASQ. *As* managers, we face a paradox of trying to satisfypublic demand for wood products, and the ever increasmgvalues people place on forests for recreation, wildlife, and scenery. There are legal mandates that must be met as well. Through laws such as the Multiple-Use Sustained-yield Act of 1960 and the National Forest Management Act of 1976, Congress directed us to manage the National Forests for a vanety of benefits and services, to provide vegetation diversity, and to maintain viable populations of plants and mldlife. These are not without cost to the sutable timber base and ASQ.

There are equal concerns over community stability, unpacts on jobs, effects on other resources, and the technical adequacy of the Forest's model to display actual management strategies. Habitat areas for spotted owl, marten, fisher, goshawk, and old growth have been identified in the Forest Plan and their effects modeled through FORPLAN Other current issues such as snag retention for wildlife, management of riparian areas, and a reduction in clearcut acres from the DEIS were also assessed.

The DEIS and draft Forest Plan did not discuss these issues in detail, but deferred them to specific project analyses. It became clear through public input and current management direction that these issues must be addressed on a forest-wide basis and modeled through FORPLAN in the FEIS and final Forest Plan. The resultant ASQ reflects a balance between jobs, demand for wood products, income to the Treasury and local communities, compliancewithlegalstatutes, and protection of various non-commodity values desired by Forest users.

Timher management will rely on both even-aged and uneven-aged techniques Uneven-aged silviculture will be the pnmary technique on 254,300 acres of selected vlewsheds, streamside acres, and rocky lands. In response to public input, group selection cutting will be emphasized in three Management Areas totaling 93,000 acres It will be applied elsewhere on the Forest as determined through project planmng and NEPA analysis Group selection cuts are scheduled on 500 acres per year. Fifty-seven percent of the suitable timber land base is allocated to the even-aged management system, which will produce 68 percent of the ASQ Uneven-aged management, predominantly through the use of stand maintenance harvest, may be used on the remaining **43** percent of the smtable lands to produce **32** percent of the ASQ

Timber harvest may occur on forest lands determined not suitable for timber production in order to salvage timber or meet other overall multiple use objectives Any volume harvested from such lands would be non-chargeable and in addition to the ASQ. Timber sale revenues will exceed costs, as they have in the past, except for a small number of sales that are planned to meet specific silvlcultural or other resource objectives. All suitable lands will contribute toward the ASQ.

Wildlife

Habitat improvement and other management activities, in cooperation with the Cahfomia Department of Fish and Game, reflect National Forest Management Act direction to maintain viable populations of all species of unldlife.

The Plan concentrates on mldlife species that dependonearlyseralvegetation suchasdeer and pronghorn antelope, and late seral vegetation such as spotted owls. Prescribed burning will be coordinated with concerned individuals and groups to improve habitat conditions for deer and pronghorn in key areas Reforestation of timber stands will take into account critical needs for forage and cover. Standards and Gmdelines for vegetative dwersity and grazing have been adjusted to enhance the amount and quality of forage available for these species.

Two sub-species of spotted owl occur on the Lassen National Forest: the northern spotted owl whose range is located primarily north of the Pit River in the Klamath Province, and the California spotted owl, located south of the Pit River

On June 23, 1989, a proposal to list the northern spotted owl under the Endangered Species Act was published in the Federal Register. Following this proposal, a committee of scientists and researchers was formed to gather known information on the habitat requirements of *this* subspecies and to develop a scientifically credible conservation strategy for them in Washington, Oregon, and the Klamath Province of California. This group was called the Interagency Scientific Committee to Address the Conservation of the Northern Spotted Owl. In April 1990, the Committee recommended a conservation strategy that included the creation of Habitat Conservation Areas (HCA's). One HCA, comprising 9,548 acres, is located on the Lassen National Forest north of the Pit River

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) made a decision to list the northern spotted owl as a Threatened species, effective July 23, 1990. On March 3, 1992 the Regional Guide for the Pacific Southwest Region was amended to include HCA's and Standards and Guidelines for northern spotted owl habitat management. This direction in the Regional Guide is currently under litigation.

The FWS is working with an interagency team to develop a recovery plan, as required under the Endangered Species Act. The litigation and development of a final recovery plan may lead to an amendment of the Regional Guide and the Lassen National Forest Plan.

The Forest Plan was prepared using 1984 Regional Guide Standards and Guidelines for the California spotted owl for areas of the Forest within the range of this subspecies. A report titled "The California Spotted Owl: A Technical Assessment of its Current Status" (referred to as the "CASPO Report") was released in May 1992. Information in the CASPO Report is currently being evaluated, which could lead to an amendment of the Standards and Guidelines in the Regional Guide and the Lassen National Forest Plan. For the past year, the Forest has been using a cumulative effects analysis process for timber sales, substituting dead timber for green timber volume, and deferring harvest in suitable California spotted owl habitat whenever possible. Use of this process will continue until evaluation of the CASPO Report is completed.

The Forest Plan includes a network of 40 Spotted Owl Habitat Areas (SOHA's) and 1 Habitat Conservation Area to provide habitat for the spotted owl and other old growth dependent species. Each of these SOHA's contains approximately 1,650 acres of the best habitat that *is* available, which is characterized by mature and over-mature, mulk-layered conifer stands with abundant standing dead and down material. No timber management will occur in any SOHA or HCA except to protect or enhance the habitat. Specific management plans will be developed for each SOHA before any management actinties are allowed to take place within them (with the exception of salvage removal). Habitat protection for non-network owls in the proposed final Plan has been superseded by the cumulative effects analysis process which defers timber harvest m suitable owl habitat outside of SOHA's

Marten and fisher habitat areas were also incorporated into the Forest Plan. The Forest delineated habitat areas and travel comdors for both marten and fisher based on the latest scientific knowledge summarized in a literature review of their habitat requirements *This* management regime is not intended to stand alone, but will contnbute to the viability of the species in northern California Nineteen habitat areas of approximately 2,100 acres each were identified for martens, while five territories of 9,800 acres each were identified as fisher habitat. These temtones are hnked by travel corridors to slutable habitat through Lassen Volcanic National Park and the Shasta-Tnnity and Plumas National Forests

In addition to spotted owl, marten, and fisher habitat, 113 temtories were identified as goshawk management areas These territones are approximately 125 acres each, and are spakally arranged to provide a network of habitat areas As nesting pairs are found, habitat areas will be moved to accommodate their actual use.

D. Forest Plan Implementation

The Forest Plan will be implemented through identification, selection, and scheduling of projects

to meet its management goals and objectives Some of these projects are displayed in the Forest Plan in Appendices A, D, and L

Project schedules will be announced in the Lassen National Forest's Quarterly Environmental Analysis Status Report, and will be available for review at Ranger District Offices and the Forest Supervisor's Office. Project schedules may change as a result of monitoring, budgets, other priorities, or unforeseen events

The Forest Plan's scheduled projects are translated into multi-year program budget proposals. The schedule is used for requesting and allocating funds needed to carry out planned management direction. Upon approval of a final budget for the Forest, the annual program of work will be updated and carried out. Outputs and activities in individual years may differ significantly from those shown in the Plan, depending on final budgets, new information derived from updated inventories, monitoring or research, and any future amendments or revisions of the Plan

As soon as practicable after approval of the Forest Plan, the Forest Supervisor shall ensure that, subject to valid existing rights, all outstanding and future permits, contracts, cooperative agreements and other instruments for occupancy and use of affected lands are consistent with the Forest Plan Implementation of the Forest Plan will also comply with the Endangered Species Act, as interpreted through consultation with the U S. Fish and Wildlife Service The northern spotted owl will be managed in conformance with the Regional Guide as amended, and the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

The Forest Plan will be implemented 30 days after Notice of this Record of Decision appears in the Federal Register. The first Plan decade is 1993-2002. The ASQ will average 96 MMBF commencing in 1993. As provided in 36 CFR 219.10, this decision will remain in effect for 10-15 years unless the Plan is revised sooner.

I am also recommending certain actions to others with the authority to make the final decision. My recommendations add six Research Natural Areas (RNA) to the RNA system. The Chief of the Forest Service establishes RNA's. I am recommending that portions of Mill, Deer, and Antelope Creeks be designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational Rivers I further recommend that 21,584 acres be added to existing wilderness areas on the Forest Like my final decisions, recommendations are accompanied by all supporting NEPA analysis and disclosure required by law and regulation If others with higher authority accept the recommendations. their resulting final decision will not ordinarily be revisited or reassessed by the Forest Service

III. ALTERNATIVES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED

A. Issues Considered

The scoping process to determine the issues, concerns, and opportunities for the Forest Plan was conducted between October 1979 and January 1980. Public meetings were held and comments were received from individuals, organizations, and government agencies. Public issues and management concerns raised at these meetings helped define the scope of the FEIS (40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508 25)

The Lassen National Forest analyzed the input and grouped similar public issues and management concerns. From these groupings, issues were developed in 26 categories:

1 Air Quality
2 Biomass
3 Cultural Resources
4 Energy
5. Facilities
6. Fire and Fuels
7. Firewood
8. Fish
9. Forest Health
10. Geology
11 Lands
12. Law Enforcement
13 Minerals
14. Range
15. Recreation
16. Sensitive Plants
17. Soils
18. Special Areas
19. Timber
20. Vegetation and Diversity
21. Visual Quality
22. Water and Riparian Areas
23. Wild and Scenic Rivers
24 Wilderness and Further Planning Areas
25. Wildlife
26. Socio-Economics

A detailed discussion of the planningissues can be found in Appendix A in the FEIS. Chapter 2 of the FEIS and Chapter 2 in the Forest Plan display how eachissue is addressedintherespective documents.

In Section IV of this Record of Decision, the issues addressed in the DEIS and proposed Forest Plan are discussed. As noted in that section, the final Forest Plan was revised as a result of new management direction and public comments.

B. Alternatives

In response to planning issues, legislation, and regulations, a range of alternatives was initially developed and analyzed in the DEIS Seven alternatives were considered in detail. Each alternative involved a different management emphasis which would result in varying resource outputs and benefits. Forest Standards and Guidelines would serve to assure quality land stewardship under all alternatives. Themultiple use nature of the alternatives would provide a mix of outputs and ensure that no smgleresource element would be emphasized to the exclusion of another resource. Information about the alternahveformulationprocess maybe found in Chapter 2 of the FEIS. Five DEIS alternatives were eliminated from detailed study in the FEIS because few public comments supported them or the issues were better resolved with the formulation of other alternatives.

Four alternatives are considered in detail in the FEIS. One alternative was modified; two new alternatives were added; and one remained the same as in the DEIS. The new alternatives, EGP (Envlronmental Group Alternative) and TGP (Timber Industry Group Alternative) were originally designed by public coalitions representing local envlronmental organizations and local timber industry interests respectively. As discussed below, they were later modified in response to new information. While neither of these alternatives was selected as the Forest Plan, concepts from both were incorporated into the PRF Alternative These concepts resulted in modifying the visual resource management program, using more uneven-aged management, and adjusting the allowable sale quantity.

In 1990, Forest Standards and Guidelines were amended to reflect growing public concerns and new mformation regarding increased protection for streamside management zones, biodiversity, old growth ecosystems, habitat to sustain viable populations of all species, use of alternative harvest methods to reduce clearcutting, and protection of spotted owls.

Theseissues are displayed in three of the alternatives considered in detail, PRF, EGP, and TGP. The CUR (Current) Alternative was not modified, to serve as a baseline of comparison for the other alternatives. Each one is summarized below

PRF (Preferred) Alternative

This alternative has been modified from the PRF Alternative presented in the DEIS, in response to public comments and to reflect the new Forest Standards and Guidehnes for wildlife and biodiversity. Production of timber is based on both even and uneven-aged management techniques. Timberharvestby clearcut and shelterwood methods would occur on an average of 2,600 acres per year. The average allowahle sale quantity of timber is 96 MMBF per year. Substantial emphasis is placed on developed recreation, with new facilities bmlt each decade

Approximately 15 percent of the Forest is managed without roads, including semi-primitive non-motonzedmanagement areas (48,000 acres), wilderness (99,644 acres), and the Research Natural Areas (14,300 acres) Spotted owl habitat would be provided in 40 SOHA's and one HCA Nineteen areas would be managed for marten habitat and five areas for fisher habitat, plus connectingmigration corridors Species vlability for goshawks would be maintained with the creation of 113goshawk management areas. These areas may be revised as habitat needs of each species are further refined and developed. Each of the 48 Management Areas on the Forest has at least five percent of the timbered acres set aside for old growth management

Although forage production is increased, livestock grazing is slightly below the current level to reducepotential conflicts with npanan resources Riparian areas are protected through streamside management zones. Under a special Riparian/ Fish Prescnption, limited management activities, including timber harvests, are permitted only when they maintain or enhance ripanan values. The recommended 1975 Wild Horse Management Plan will be updated based on a

new range assessment The average annual budget for the planning penod is $16.3 million

CUR (Current Management) Alternative

This alternative is a continuation of current management policies and practices Important elements are (1) limitmg expenditures to the current level, (2) providing no increase in camp grounds, and (3) maintaining current management policies and commodity output levels (e g., timber harvests, forage for livestock, developed recreation) for most resources while reducing visual quality and backcountry recreation opportunities. It is doubtful that this alternative could meet the current legal requirements for species dwersity over the long run

Approximately eight percent of the Forest would be managed without roads, includmg existing wilderness (78,060 acres) and existing Research Natural Areas (4,443 acres). There are no semi-pnmitive non-motonzed areas in this alternative Spotted owl habitat would be provided in 39 SOHA areas Timber harvest by clearcut and shelterwood methods would occur on an average of 5,900 acres per year The ASQ is 171 MMBF The recommended Wild Horse Management Plan will be revised to make herd size compatible with carrying capacity on National Forest land. The average annual budget for the planning period is $15.1 million.

EGP (Environmental Group) Alternative

The Envlronmental Group Alternative was designed by a coalition of local envlronmental interests after review of the DEIS and draft Plan in 1986. It was modified in 1990 to incorporate new Forest Standards and Guidelines for wildlife, vegetative diversity, snag retention, and reduced management levels in streamside management zones All other aspects of the Alternative as formulated by the coalition have been retained

The average allowable sale quantity of tunber is 94 MMBF per year, accomplished through the stand maintenance and group selection method of uneven-aged timber management. Timber harvest would occur on an average 4,000 acres each year This allows for maintenance of a high level of visual quality. Spotted owl habitat would be provided in 40 SOHA's and one HCA. Approximately 17 percent of the Forest would be managed without roads, includmg 14,300 acres of Research Natural Areas, 55,000 acres of sem-primtive non-motonzed recreation areas; and 121,146 acres of mlderness Although forage production is increased, livestock grazing is slightly below the current level to reduce pressure on npanan resources The average annual budget for the planning penod is $17 0 million.

TGP (Timber Industry Group) Alternatcve

This alternative, which was designed by a coalition of local timbermdustry interests, is intended to provlde a moderate level of commodity benefits TGP was later modified in 1990 to incorporate new Forest Standards and Guidelines for wildlife, vegetative diversity and reduced timber management in ripanan areas. TGP provides a balance of silvicultural methods by clearcuttmg an average 3,300 acres per year and group selection harvesting on 1,000 acres per year The allowable sale quantity of timber is 118 MMBF per year

Spotted owl habitat would be provlded in 40 SOHA's and one HCA Non-commodity resources, includmg vlsual quahty, are managed at minimum sustainable levels Approximately eight percent of the Forest would be managed without roads, includmg 14,300 acres of Research Natural Areas and 78,060 acres of wilderness. There are no semi-primitive non-motonzed areas in this alternative. Current visual quality objectives are retained only along State Highways. Although forage production is increased, livestock grazing is slightly below the current level to reduce pressure on riparian resources The average annual budget for the planning period is $18.5 million.

C. Public Participation

The Lassen National Forest conducted an active public mvolvement program. In preparation of the DEIS and draft Forest Plan, federal, State, and local agencies were informed and consulted. Four seta of public meetings were held. The first meetings took place in 1979 and 1980 for the purpose of identifying public issues.

Coordination with other governmental agencies was recognized as an important part of the planning process. Plans of other agencies that nnght be affected by the Forest Plan were solicited. Meetmgs were held with State and local agen-

cies. Several meetings between the Forest and the California Department of Fish and Game were held. The Forest Wildlife Biologist worked with his counterparts in the Department, both at the State and local level, in the development of Standards and Guidehnes, selection of the management indicator species, and consideration of other measures affecting wildlife.

A notice of intent to prepare an EIS for the Forest Plan was published in the Federal Register on December 7,1979. A notice of availability of the DEIS and proposed Forest Plan was published in the Federal Register on May 9, 1986, and announced by area news media. Over 1,300 copies of the proposed Forest Plan and DEIS were distributed to the public dunng the comment penod, which lasted 120 days through September 8, 1986. Public bnefings and hearings were held in eight local communities and with several local groups mcluding county supervisors, chambers of commerce, Audubon Society Chapters, Native American groups, Lions Club, and Elks Club to familiarize members of the public with the draft Forest Plan Over 1,600 individuals, organizations, and federal, State, and local agencies commented All comments were considered in the preparation of the final document and in the choice of the Preferred Alternative as the Forest Plan.

Because six years had passed between the release of the draft and final Plans, I delayed the Record of Decision to allow for an additional 60 day comment period. It was important to me that the pubhc have an opportunity to respond to the many changes made between the draft and final Plans It was equally important that we not overlook any critical mformation that commenters may bring to our attention A "Highlights" document summarizing the FEIS and an "Analysis Summary" were also released. Because of the high level of pubhc interest in the decline of the Allowable Sale Quantity, the "Analysis Summary" was particularly useful in documenting the primary factors that contnbuted to that reduction and the reasons why The proposed final Plan and FEIS were released for public comment on August 10,1992 A notice of availability was published in the Federal Register on August 11, 1992 Over 1,700 individuals and groups provided comments. Public meetings were held in Susanvllle, Chester, Chico, and Burney. Several presentations were made before interested groups. This last round of public participation was extremely beneficial in amending the FEIS and Plan as discussed in Section IV below, and in the accompanying "Response to Comments" document.

IV. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This section describes the significant factors forming the basis for my decision to choose the PRF Alternative as the foundation for the Plan. These considerations were derived from the issues identified through the planning process, from public comments on the DEIS and the draft and proposed final Forest Plans, and from new mformation and changmg direction.

No single factor determined my decision. Rather, using professional judgement and experience, many factors were considered and weighed Based on consideration of all factors, including monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits, land capability, protection of the basic resources, public desire, and advice and suggestions from other agencies, organizations, and experienced Forest officers, the Forest Plan sets a course that results in the greatest overall long-term benefit to the pubhc.

A. Response to Public Comments

The Forest received vaned comments from many different interests. Often, the comments from one reviewer conflicted with those from another. The Forest responded to the input received on the draft Plan and DEIS. Substantive comments and the responses to them can be found in Chapter 10 of the FEIS. This input was very helpful to the Forest. It showed areas of confusion, disagreement, and conflict, and also areas of agreement and those portions of the draft Plan that the public accepted The comments included corrections that could be made to the document, concerns that warranted better explanations, and major issues to be addressed further

Most of the comments received on the FEIS and proposed final Plan were similar to those received on the DEIS and draft Plan. Specific changes made as a result of the comments submitted on the FEIS and proposed final Plan are descnbed in the "Response to Comments" document and summanzed in the ROD More information about the Forest's response to comments is available in the planning records.

How the Forest Plan responds to the major issues that surfaced during the two public comment periods is discussed below

1. Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ)

Issue - How much timber should be made available for harvest each year on the Forest?

Summary *of Public* Comments - Several hundred comments addressed the harvest level in the proposed Plan. Many felt the proposed harvest level was too high and that preserving environmental quality should be given emphasis. Some felt the proposed Plan was an acceptable balance. But the largest number of comments expressed disappointment with the proposed decline in ASQ, and the resultant loss of jobs and county payments.

Resolution - Resolution of this issue is very closely tied to several other issues, especially those discussed below This Forest Plan is designed to provide timber management on all suitable lands while maintaining plant and animal diversity, protecting scenic quality and providing a high level of soil productivity, water, and air quality The existing Timber Management Plan provides for a sale program of **179** MMBF. (The existing Plan describes the timber harvest level as a "potential yield which is similar to ASQ.) The **draft** Forest Plan called for an ASQ of **154** MMBF. The average annual ASQ in the final Forest Plan is **96** MMBF per year.

Throughout the planning process, there has been an increasing awareness, both nationally and locally, over the quality of the forest environment that needs to be maintained. This has paralleled another concern over the economic impact that decreased timber harvesting will have on forest dependent communities and the public's demand for wood products. There is considerable debate over which direction the Forest Service should be heading. The trend has been to move away from an emphasis on commodity production toward a more balanced approach between commodity and amenity values

The Forest Plan ASQ is the result of the interaction of several adjustments in the proposed Forest Plan, as discussed in the "Analysis Summary." **While** some management activities are compatible with timber production, others such as non-motorized dispersed recreation are not To provide for multiple use, it was necessary to reduce or restrict timber management in several areas on the Forest These include riparian areas, SOHA's, semi-primitive areas, proposed wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers, other special areas, and fisher and marten habitat To the extent possible, land allocations that precluded or allowed only limited timber management were overlapped to minimize the reduction in ASQ

The most significant impact on the **ASQ** is from the Forest Standards and Guidelines adopted to manage riparian areas and wildlife species dependent on old growth ecosystems The National Forest Management Act requires that viable populations of all native and desired non-native species be maintained on National Forest lands. Where feasible, suitable wildlife habitat was located within areas already constrained from timber harvesting such as wilderness For example, of the **93,875** acres in fisher and marten habitat, **69,118** acres overlap with other areas that have reduced or no timber yields scheduled.

Current information on habitat needs for Sensitive species such as the California spotted owl, marten, and fisher is not definitive, but provides the best known direction at this time. There is presently enough data to determine that future management options will not remain available to us unless the presently recommended habitat areas are set aside in this decade. One-third of the habitat areas established for these three species is deficit in meeting the "medium" suitable habitat capability model, required to maintain population viability (See Appendix O of the Plan) Timber management, except to enhance habitat suitability, is not an option under the present deficit condition. New information on these species will be evaluated, and subsequent management direction will be incorporated by amendment or revision of the Plan.

An increase in ASQ can only be made by changing land allocations, Forest Standards and Guidelines, management prescriptions, or mitigation measures. Some of factors in the final Plan that prevented the Forest from meeting the demand for a higher ASQ were:

1. Habitat areas for spotted owl, marten, and fisher, proposed wilderness, proposed Wild and

Scenic Rivers, special areas, and semi-primitive areas are declared unsuitable for timber management.

2. A nunimum of five percent of each Management Area is retained as old growth *to* contnbute to biodiversity

3. Only limited timber management will occur in goshawk territories and old growth retention areas, as called for under the G Prescription.

4. Timber harvesting within streamside management zones is reduced to protect wildlife habitat and watershed values.

5. Clearcut acres in the draft Plan have been reduced from 6,300 acres per year to 1,600 acres per year in the final Plan

6. The maximum number of regeneration acres is constrained to 4,000 acres **per** year

The average annual ASQ of 96 **MMBF** of timber under tlus Plan is the upper limit of chargeable wood *to* be sold from smtable timber land during the first decade of the planning penod. It is not an actual proposal for timber sale offenngs. The annual timber sale offerings will also include non-chargeable material and will depend on budget appropriations, multiple-use objectives, market conditions, and new information Actual sale volumes will be determned ody after project planning and NEPA analysis.

2. Diversity of Plants and Animals

Issue - Would the proposed Forest Plan ensure that the Forest will retain diverse communities of plants and animals?

Summary of Public Comments - In 1986, over 50 comments directly addressed the diversity issue, and over 50 other comments addressed diversity indirectly through a concern for increased deer populations and improved habitat The comments were made by individuals, envlronmental and sportsmen's groups, and the California **De**partment of Fish and Game. Practically all commenters favored a hgher level of diversity than what they perceived would be provided through the proposed Plan.

The issue of diversity also revolves around how much old growth *to* retain, how much wildlife habitat to provide for species viability, and how to manage ripanan areas. The scope of this issue has widened considerably since the **draft** Plan was released in 1986 Growing public concern, new research, and management direction have heightened the unportance of diversity.

In 1992, most comments focused on maintaining habitat for old growth dependent species such as spotted owls, goshawks, marten and fisher. Concerns about improved habitat for deer herds were **also** expressed Many of the comments from indmduals were general, supporting either increased protection or increased stand management. The California Department of Fish and Game, envlronmental and industrial groups provided some specific information about certain habitats or individual spenes. There was also concern that the information used was outdated or incomplete

Specific comments were received dealing unth protection of sugar pine, oak retention guidelines, re-seedmg with native plant species, and the lack of a management indicator species for the eastside pine type

Resolution - The Forest Plan does several things to address the need to maintam diversity. Natural processes will govern diversity on 14,300 acres of Research Natural Areas and nearly 100,000 acres of wilderness This is the same number of acres proposed in the draft Forest Plan and an increase of 9,812 acres and 21,584 acres respectively from current management.

In response *to* public comments, specific management reqmrements for early and late seral habitat areas have been added to the final Forest Plan. Habitat to maintain viable populations of plant and wildlife species is provided Habitat areas have been estabhshed for spotted owl, marten, fisher, and goshawks Maps are now available whch show the placement of our proposed spotted owl, fisher, marten, and goshawk areas and the linkages to other National **Forests.** In these designated areas, habitat will be evaluated on a site-specific project basis and the locations will be verified or moved, as needed At the same time, **management** activities necessary to enhance the condition of the habitat, such as salvage or thinning, will be identified

Five percent of each Management Area has been identified for management as old growth ecosystems These areas are linked with wildlife habitat, wilderness, riparian and other special areas to form a suitable network for old growth dependent species. Management Area Standards and Guidelines also specify a minimum number of acres that must be maintained in each successional stage in each Management Area. Limited timber harvesting will occur in streamside management zones and only if riparian values can be maintained or enhanced.

The final Forest Plan also includes several management techniques to improve diversity For early seral habitat, the Forest will work with the California State Department of Fish and Game, sportsmen's and environmental groups on a project-by-project basis to identify key habitat areas for deer herds that are in decline, in order to prioritize prescribed burns for wildlife. Prescribed fire will be used on an average of **1,300** acres per year to improve deer habitat (This is in addition to the **4,750** acres of prescribed burning done in support of reforestation and for fire hazard reduction purposes.)

Both the draft and final versions of the Forest Plan utilize special reforestation techniques on 600 acres per year of timber land in order to provide high quality habitat and to improve forage for species that rely on early successional forest habitat. (See the Early Successional Prescription in Chapter **4** of the Forest Plan.) Reforestation techniques to perpetuate sugar pine have also been established. These modified reforestation practices have not been extensively used on the Forest in the past. Specific monitoring items are designed to insure that reforestation efforts are successful and that diversity is maintained throughout the Forest The concerns about outdated information are discussed below under item #11, Spotted Owl Habitat

In response to comments received in 1992, the following changes to the Forest **Plan** are made.

A Standard and Guideline to protect apparently rust-free or rust-resistant sugar pines has been added.

Oak retention guidelines have been strengthened by adding a basal area requirement.

A Standard and Guideline to re-seed with locally collected native plant species, when possible, has been added

The shrub bitterbrush has been added as a management indicator species for eastside pine, and willow/alder/cottonwood/aspen have been added as management indicator species for riparian areas

A Standard and Guideline has been added to provide **125** acres of habitat for each goshawk territory.

(See Sections E and F, under Vegetation and Diversity, in the "Response to Comments.")

3. Even-Aged Timber Management

Issue - Would widespread clearcutting (even-aged silviculture) unacceptably degrade Forest **resources**?

Summary of Public Comment - A vast majority of commenters on this issue opposed clearcutting as a method of **timber** harvest These responses came from the entire spectrum of commenters: individuals, environmental groups, timber industry, and public agencies. Many stated that clearcutting is detrimental to the natural values of forest land and to the recreational experience Many felt that widespread clearcutting could destroy visual resources, plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and degrade soil, water, and **air** quality. Both environmental groups and the timber industry expressed preference for some form of small group selection harvesting.

Resolution - The ***draft*** Forest Plan proposed to clearcut **6,300** acres per year and to conduct shelterwood harvesting on another 900 acres per year bringing the total even-aged harvest to **7,200** acres per year.

The final Forest Plan anticipates clearcutting on 1,600 acres per year and shelterwood harvesting on another 1,000 acres per year. Total even-aged harvesting in the final Forest Plan is 2,600 acres per year, a reduction of nearly **64** percent from the **draft** Forest Plan. These figures are estimates, as the final determination of silvicultural method is made only after site-specific, project level analysis.

Usually clearcuts on the Lassen National Forest are not conventional clearcuts where all the trees are removed. Rather, they are regeneration mosaics designed to leave small pockets of younger standing trees in between harvested areas. The 1,600 acres of clearcutting in the Plan are based on a modeling assumption only, that this would be the optimum silvicultural treatment if the conditions below were applicable. This figure will not be a target to indiscriminately aim for each year. Rather, sound ecosystem management principles and practices will be applied in the analysis of every proposed vegetative management activity As expressed in the Chiefs June 4, 1992 letter calling for a reduction in clearcutting on National Forest lands, clearcuttmg will only be used where this method is necessary to meet Forest Plan objectives under one or more of the followmg circumstances:

1. To establish, enhance, or maintain habitat for Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive species.

2. To enhance wildlife habitat or to provide for recreation, scemc vistas, utility line, road corndors, facility sites, reservoirs, or similar development.

3. To rehabilitate lands adversely impacted by events such as fires, windstorms, or insect or disease infestations.

4. To preclude or minimize the occurrence of potentially adverse impacts from insect or disease infestations, windthrow, logging damage, or other factors affecting forest health

5. To provide for the establishment and growth of desired trees or other vegetative species that are shade intolerant such as Douglas fir and pines.

6 To rehabilitate poorly stocked stands due to past management practices or natural events, and to improve growth rates.

7. To minimize ground disturbance and watershed effects as a result of harvesting more volume on fewer acres and less frequent entnes in the same area

8. To reduce the fire hazard through more efficient slash cleanup.

9. To meet research needs.

The environmental impacts from clearcuttmg can be mitigated by the following practices:

1. Avoiding clearcuts greater than 20 acres in size.

2. Carefully designing clearcuts to maintain visual quality objectives, provide wildlife habitat and travel corridors, and protect soil productivlty.

3. Dispersing clearcut units, if possible so that a logical future harvest unit of at least five acres separates them

4. Pre-designating landings and skid trails to minimize the areal extent of detnmental soil disturbance (DSD).

5. Establishing streamside management zones of sufficient width to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and other riparian values.

6 Designing clearcut units to save advanced natural regeneration and reduce visual quality impacts by maintaining the appearance of continuous vegetative cover at the landscape/watershed level

7 Designing fuel treatments and site preparation activlties to minimize soil compaction, loss of organic matter and soil nutrients.

8 Leaving acceptable levels of large and small woody debris for soil cover, nutrient recycling, and wildlife habitat

9. Reforesting clearcut units to maintain the vegetative composition of natural stands where appropriate. (See Section E, under Timber, in the "Response to Comments")

Uneven-aged management, through the use of group selection cuts, will be applied on 500 acres per year in three Management Areas These areas represent the three major timber types on the Lassen National Forest red fir, mixed conifer, and eastside pine. Group selection units are two acres or less in size. Uneven-aged management is appropriate on gentler slopes where logs can be removed with tractors Advantages to group selection harvests are:

1. Reduced vlsual quality impacts by regenerating smaller units

2 Greater protection of npanan areas, water quality, and soil productivity from less exposure of bare ground in any one area

Historically, concerns ulth group selection harvesting included the effect on long-term timber yields and growth, the regeneration of shade intolerant species, soil compaction from multiple entnes, and increased administrative costs This method will be evaluated *to* see if it can be successfully applied on a wider scale.

Visual Quality Objectives (VQO's) are specified for all parts of the Forest Timber management activities ulll conform to the VQO's established for each area.

4. Fire Suppression

Issue - Can the Forest provide adequate fire protection and continue to meet its mutual-aid responsibilities?

Summary of Public ***Comments*** - Several commenters expressed concern about the proposed reduction in fire suppression capability Among them were the State Board of Forestry, the State Resources Secretary, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the Tehama County Board of Supervisors. While a few commenters queshoned the possible loss of tunber due to wildfire, more of the concern focused on the Forest's abihty to protect pnvate land and *to* meet mutual aid responsibilities.

Concern was also expressed that the decline in ASQ would result in overstocked stand con&tions and an increase in fuel build-up problems This would eventually lead *to* larger, more intense wildfires and stand destruction

Resolution - The Forest unll maintain the nine fire engine crews that are currently in place rather than the five engine crews proposed in the draft Forest Plan This will insure that the Forest has a wildland fire protection capability for both National Forest and private wildlands (not structures) within the Forest's protection boundary and *can* continue *to* meet mutual aid responsibilities.

Forest health and the accumulation of fuel loads ulll be momtored. If excessive mortality is occurnngabove natural rates, appropnate silvicultural treatments will be conducted to reduce fuel levels. Areas under consideration for treatment include wldlife habitat, streamside management zones, old growth retention areas, and semipnmitive areas. (See Sections E and F, under Forest Health, in the "Response to Comments ")

6. Fish

Issue - Does the Forest Plan provlde adequate protection for anadromous fish habitat?

Summary of Public Comments - Commenters expressed concern about the level of habitat protection for anadromous fish, especially spnng-run chmook salmon. Recommendahons in the comments vaned from designating more areas as wild and scenic or wilderness, to increasing streamside management zone (SMZ) widths.

Resolution - The Forest recognizes the precarious status of the spring chmook salmon run and that high quality habitat conditions on the Forest must be maintained in order to contnbute to the recovery of anadromous stocks.

The Forest Plan provldes the opportunity *to* adequately protect high quahty anadromous fish habitat through existing Standards and Guidelmes, including proposed wild and scenic and wilderness designation, SMZ's, and application of the Riparian/Fish Prescnption.

In the Plan, a combination of Wild and Scenic River and/or wilderness designation is proposed for all mainstream sections of Deer, Mill and Antelope Creeks located on lands admimstered by the Forest. Those sections eligible for designation will be managed to protect free-flowing conditions and their outstandingly remarkable values, including anadromous fish habitat.

For tributary sub-basins, anadromous resource protection is provided through the designation of mmimum SMZ's. The SMZ designations are flexible in that widths can be increased *to* meet resource protection needs identified during project planning. Additionally, the Riparian/Fish Prescription is applied to the SMZ's and gives preferential consideration *to* nparian-dependent

resources when conflicts among land-use activities occur. Width and management activities within designated zones will, at a minimum, be prescribed by qualified fishenes and hydrology professionals Individual projects or groups of projects may specify more stringent guidelines and mitigation measures in the anadromous fishery watersheds.

In response to public comment, the Forest will further address the issue of anadromous fish habitat protection, by coordinating with appropriate private and public entities in the development of basm-level management plans for the three anadromous watersheds These plans are scheduled to be completed by the end of fiscal year 1995, and will mclude development of management options that would reduce the risk ofstockextinction. (See Section E, under Fish, in the "Response to Comments")

Issue · Does the Plan emphasize short-term actions (structures) over long-term solutions (alternative land management activities) for fisheries habitat improvement?

Summary *of Public* Comment -Comments referenced portions of the Plan and FEIS stating that the Forest will construct a target number of habitat improvement structures per year to improve fish habitat and increase fish poundage Commenters stated that structures are not needed where good quality habitat exists (1 e , anadromous streams), and that structures attempt to fix symptoms ofbasin-levelproblems Respondents identified the need to restore habitat by addressing the cause of degradation, and to use structures as a last resort only after thorough evaluation.

Resolutzon -An objective of the Plan is to maintain fish habitat at current levels and to evaluate habitat improvement projects to rehabilitate conditions created by past land management activities It is acknowledged in the FEIS that all potential improvements have not yet had project-specific environmental analyses that would determine implementation feasibility The FEIS also states that, in general, structural habitat improvement projects are considered as last resort mitigation measures.

An integral part of project evaluation is habitat assessment. Forest Plan Standard and Guideline direction is to identify and inventory primary watersheds to assess existing habitat conditions.

A fisheries mplementation plan is currently being written which will further define protocol for fish habitat improvement projects and will emphasize basm-level management to maintain or improve habitat

In response to public comment, a Standard and Guideline was added to the Plan to develop fish habitat restoration projects based on coordinated resource inventories, including fish habitat assessments, completed at the watershed level. Restoration projects will meet both upland and npananneeds. (See Section E, under Fish, in the "Response to Comments)

6. Forest Cover

Issue - Will the Plan provide for the appearance of "continuous forest cover" over the Lassen?

Summary of Public Comments - Many commenters questioned whether the reliance on even-aged timber management and clearcutting would maintam the appearance of "continuous forest cover" on a landscape level.

Resolutron - This issue is very closely tied to the even-aged timber management issue descnbed in the item #3 above. The justification for clearcutting and steps that are taken to reduce visual impacts are well descnbed there, along with a bnef discussion of the uneven-aged management trials on the Lassen.

Incorporated into the design of the PRF alternative are measures which reflect adjustments the Lassen made to comply with new direction. These are:

1. Clearcutting. The new direction does not propose to elimnate clearcutting as a management tool, but to reduce its use. Conditions are set forth upon which clearcutting is acceptable. The final Plan responded to this direction by reducing clearcutting from the 6,300 acre level as proposed in the 1986 draft Plan to 1,600 acres per year

2. Rotation Ages Minimum rotation ages were increased dramatically. The 1986 draft Plan

modeled harvesting based on 60-80 year minimum rotations To reflect continuous forest cover direction, the final Plan increases this to 120-150 years. The net effect of tlus is less openings across the landscape and a more continuous forest cover look

3. Regeneration Caps In order to reduce the number of openmgs, the final Plan limits the amount of regeneration harvesting (includmg clearcnttmg, shelterwood, and overstory removal) that can occur. This is substantially below the level which the land base can support, but is in response to the spirit of maintaining continuous forest cover. In the 1986 draft Plan, **8,900** acres per year were listed to be regenerated. The final Plan reduces this amount to 4,000 acres.

7. Forest Health

Issue - Will the Forest remam relatively healthy in the future at current levels of harvest intensity?

Summary of Public Comments - Several commenters stated that hmited timber management may adversely affect forest health as a result of overstocked stands. One commenter was specifically concerned with the percentage of annual growth that is harvested and its relationship to current and future forest health. The commenter cited 200 MMBF of growth now occurring on the Forest as compared to a 96 MMBF annual harvest.

Resolutron - Many acres have resource objectives which are not necessarily consistent unth maintaining desired stocking levels for timber management. However, FORPLAN modeling does mdicate significant increases in inventory levels on those lands which have hmited timber yields. This trend is notable for the first five decades and could have the potential to jeopardize other resource values in the future.

Harvest intensities within lands assigned to full or modified timber management are at levels which minimize forest health problems for the planning honzon. As harvesting and stocking control measures convert most of these lands to a managed situation, mortality due to overstocked stands will decrease. Drought, fire, and other factors may cause temporary increases in mortality rates of conifer trees, as is currently the case In extreme cases, adjustments to the Forest inventory will need to be acknowledged and harvest levels revised through the forest planning process

Salvage will be conducted in spotted owl, marten, fisher and goshawk areas to maintain the quahty of habitat for these species. There is concern that mcreasing mortality will put these areas at risk due to wildfire, insect infestation, or other natural catastrophes. If this occurs, suitable habitat would be difficult to replace in the amount and condition required by species habitat capability models. Continued monitonng will assess the effects of stand mortality and salvage harvesting on habitat conditions and mldlife population levels.

The language in the Plan, Chapter **5**, Forest Health bee Section F, "Response to Comments"), has been revised to include momtoring for widespread forest health decline due to overstockmg If trends are validated that demonstrate resource objectives are not bemg met, management prescnptions and harvest mtensities will be adjusted at both the project level and the forest planning level.

8. Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV's)

Issue - Does the Forest Plan provide sufficient opporturuties for OHV use and also protect other resources from O W use?

Summary of Public Comments - Comments ranged from a preference for maintaining the status quo with no additional OHV allocations, to a total prohibition of OHV use on all National Forest lands, to increasing the number and size of the OHV areas.

A majority of commenters felt that the Chips Creek, Ishi B, Butt Mountain, Cub Creek, Polk Springs, High Lakes, Antelope Creek, and Sulphur Creek areas should not be open to OHV use. They were concerned that wildlife habitat, fisheries, watershed, soils, vegetation, cultural sites, and wdderness values of these areas would deteriorate or be damaged by OHV use. Many commenters in this group want OHV use greatly restricted, if not prohibited, in most areas of the National Forest.

Others felt OHV use should not be restricted, and that any restrictions should be based on documented resource damage or unmanageability.

Resolution - About 3,900 acres in the Antelope Creek and 1,800 acres in the Brushy Mountam areas within the Ishi B former Further Planning Area will be managed for semi-pnmihve nonmotorized recreation. In the past, these areas provlded very hmited opportunity for OHV use due to extremely rugged terrain.

Most of the Forest (763,000 acres) is open to off-highway vehicles anth no restnctions in the Forest Plan. At present, the Forest receives only limited OHV use The Forest Off Road Vehicle Plan and Winter Off-Highway Vehicle Plan, which are incorporated into the Forest Plan, contain direction that provides for resource protection and enhanced OHV opportunities in those areas that do receive OHV use. Management Area Standard and Guidelines have been added to the Plan to monitor the effect of motorized access on cultural resources and to apply appropriate mitigation where needed. (See Section E, under Cultural Resources, in the "Response to Comments ")

'9. Range

Issue.. Are forage utilization standards too ngid and inflexible to adapt management to site-by-site situations?

Summary of Public Comments - Several comments noted that rigid Forest-wide forage utilization standards would not be adequate to consider site-by-site conditions The forage utilization standards identified in the Standards and Gudelines in the Plan were commented on as being too high, too low, or were not relevant toward measuring the parameters that are important to rangeland management. Specific comments were received for forage utilization standards for annual grass, perennial grass and npanan ecosystems. At least one commenter mentioned that the Residual Dry Matter (RDM) levels (for annual grasslands) were too high in the Plan and that some annual grass range sites do not even produce that much herbaceous vegetation in some years.

Resolution - The public comments indicated a need to make some changes to the Standards and Guidehnes which would be more responsive to achieving our objectives and to clarify existing direction. (See Sections E and F, under Range, in the "Response to Comments.")

The Forest is revising the annual grass residue proper utihzation standard to leave a minimum of 700 pounds of herbaceous residue per acre at the time of germination precipitation (October of a given year). This change is from a utilization standard that identified a 1,000 pound per acre minimum anth no reference to time of year. The RDM of 700 pounds per acre at the time of germination precipitation is generally recognized as desirable to provide a seedbed that is adequate for germination of annual grassland herbaceous species.

The Plan identifies the need to adapt forage utilization standards on a site-by-site, case-by-case basis. If there is concern over the total production of some rangelands as compared to the RDM levels, then the professional range managers on the Forest, the permittee and other interested parties will need to develop alternative management strategies that consider all of the relevant variables. For example, variation in the time of year an annual range is grazed, when the cattle are removed, and management alternatives may or may not deviate from the standards identified in the plan.

On perennial grass rangelands, forage utilization standards are unchanged. Added emphasis has been placed in the Standards and Guidelmes in the Plan to clarify that site or allotment conditions may deviate from these set guidelines to accomplish specific management objectives. Management strategies and utilization standards for achieving desired future conditions ulll be developed through coordination with the permittee, Californa Department of Fish and Game, and other interested parties. These strategies and standards will be identified in the allotment management plan and annual operating plan

The Forest will always be open to new information that will make its rangeland management task easier and more effective If new information indicates a different range monitoring technique would improve work quality, steps will be taken to adopt it. The Forest views its mission as one that includes flexibility to adapt to changing management needs as a primary asset. This

flexibility unll be used whenever it will improve the quality of the rangeland management program

10. Riparian Area Management

Issue - Would the condition of the nparian areas be mamtained or improved under the proposed Forest Plan?

Summary *of Public* Comments - Some commenters feel that grazing or timber harvesting should not be permitted in riparian areas because of existing or potential damage *to* riparian resources. Others would like *to* see these activities continued because there is no conclusive evidence that damage is occurring While a few commenters indicated limited use was acceptable, most commenters were polarized at one position or the other. Areas of concern include the anadromous watersheds, which support declining populations of spring-run chmook salmon (see the discussion under item #5, Fish) Another area of concern is the 117,000 acre Pine Creek watershed. This major drainage into Eagle Lake is also a grazing area on the Forest. The Lassen County Farm Advisor feels additional studies need to be conducted before use of riparian areas is limited. The Soil Conservation Semce and two Regional Water Quality Control Boards feel that additional protection is needed in riparian areas.

Resolutron - The final Plan restricts management in riparian areas. No timber harvesting will occur within designated streamside management zones, or around wetlands and lakes with ripanan resources, except to enhance nparian values, maintain meadows or provide for human safety The Plan provides standards for shade and ground cover in ripanan areas. It provldes for down logs to improve fisheries habitat. Protective vegetation helps shield streams from nearby management activities and disturbance. Soil and water quality are protected. Many ripanan areas are managed as habitat or travel corridors for wildlife

If management is proposed, Forest Standards and Guidelines restrict timber harvesting to single tree selection and limit the use of tractors or other heavy equipment in riparian areas. Standards and Guidelines also allow for reducing, redistributing, or excluding livestock as needed *to* protect riparian areas Grazing levels will not be increased as had been projected in the draft Forest Plan. The Forest will continue *to* work with permittees, concerned organizations, and government agencies *through* a Coordinated Resource Management Plan *to* develop improved management guidelines for the Pine Creek watershed. These measures will maintain and, in some cases, improve the condition of nparian areas.

In addition, the allotment management plans for each grazing allotment unll be developed as soon as practicable *to* assure conformance with the Forest Plan. Allotment management plans will include appropnate local standards and guidelines for riparian zones as needed.

11. Spotted Owl Habitat

Issue - Is the spotted owl habitat sufficient for vlability of this old-growth dependent species? How will habitat protection affect timber production on the Forest?

Summary of *Public* Comments - Over 200 individual public comments were received about the spotted owl issue in 1986 The comments were polanzed and generally supported providing either significantly more or significantly less spotted owl habitat than was recommended in the draft Forest Plan Those who favored less spotted owl habitat frequently did so on economic grounds, while those who supported an increase were concerned unth unldlife and old growth ecosystems. The California Department of Fish and Game supported an increase in spotted owl habitat.

In 1992, comments on spotted owl management were mostly associated with concerns about other species that depend on late seral habitat such as goshawks, marten and fisher. The '' ments about managing for old growth habitat were still polarized and mostly general, requesting either more protection than the Plan affords or fewer restrictions in special habitat areas to support a higher level of timber harvesting. Commenters were also concerned about habitat fragmentation and linkages between older forest types, and that the information used was outdated or incomplete.

Resolution - The Lassen National Forest is partly within the range of the northern spotted owl and partly within the range of the California spotted

owl. There is one 9,548 acre HCA and a network of 40 SOHA's designed to provide for the viability of spotted owls on the Lassen. The design of the network was based on the best available information at the hme. The final Forest Plan prondes one more SOHA than was proposed in the draft Forest Plan. Tlus SOHA contains smtable habitat on the most eastern known portion of their range.

In the DEIS, only a 1,000 acre core habitat was identified for each SOHA. The final Forest Plan designates 1,650 acres for every SOHA. No scheduled timber harvesting will occur within the SOHA network except for incidental salvage or thinning to maintam or enhance habitat suitability. The cumulative effects analysis process will continue until the evaluation of the CASPO Report is completed. This process defers timber harvest wherever suitable owl habitat is found, and supersedes direchon in the proposed final Plan to protect 125 acres of suitable habitat for every pair of non-network owls found on the Forest.

The Forest Plan and EIS were prepared using the Spotted Owl Standards and Guidelines in the Pacific Southwest Regional Gmde. Smce the Regional Guide was published in 1984, field observations and a number of scientific studies indicated that California spotted owls utilize more acres and a broader variety of habitats than provided for by the Regional Guide. As a result, a technical assessment of California spotted owl habitat needs (known as the "CASPO Report") was initiated in 1991, and released in May 1992 The evaluation of this report, which is currently underway, may lead to an amendment of the Standards and Guidelmes in the Regional Gmde and the Lassen National Forest Plan

Completion of the recovery plan for the northern spotted owl, determination of Forest Service objectives under the recovery plan, and current litigation may also lead to an amendment of the Standards and Guidelines in the Regional Guide and the Forest Plan

Linkages between late seral habitat areas were provided for as much as possible A map showing the spatial arrangement of proposed spotted owl, marten, fisher, goshawk, and old growth areas is now available

Most of the new data cited by commenters refers to literature renews, mtenm direction, or management recommendations rather than new scientific studies or significant new information This literature has been reviewed and considered, but few changes were necessary.

12. Visual Resource Management

Issue - How much acreage should be allocated to the View/Timber Prescription, and what effect would this have on the level of timber harvest?

Summary of Public Comments - The pnmary concern of the commenting public is to what extent the View/Timber Prescription, and visual management in general, will be applied to timber land. A significant number of commenters expressed concern that the View/Timber Prescription was too excessive, overly restricting timber production and reducing harvest levels On the other hand, a significant number of commenters supported the View/Timber Prescription of the draft Forest Plan or supported more emphasis on visual resource management.

Resolution - The wording of the View/Timber Prescnption has been changed so it is clear that more mtense timber harvesting can occur in areas managed under tlus prescnption. Clearcut units, particularly in flatter areas, can meet the visual quality objective of Partial Retention if they have irregular shapes and edges such as those found in the natural landscape In addition, the acreage allocated to the View/Timber Prescription in the final Forest Plan is reduced by eight percent from the draft Forest Plan (183,500 acres to 168,000 acres). The acreage allocation now better reflects what areas are actually seen from the travel corridors of concern and those areas that can receive more mtensive management Forest Standards and Guidelmes for visual resources require that the highest possible visual quality be maintained throughout the Forest, commensurate with other resource needs.

13. Water Quality

Issue - Will water quality be maintained?

Summary of Public Comments - Few comments were received on this issue in 1986. Commenters, in addition to individuals, included the Soil Con-

servation Semce, State Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Game, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, and U S. Envlronmental Protection Agency

Most commenters were concerned with a projected potential reductionoffour percentin water quality after implementingthedraft Forest Plan Others felt the Forest's assumptions about the effectiveness of Best Management Practices (BMP's) in protecting water quality are based on inadequate information. Some environmental groups asserted that the potential four percent decline in the water quality would constitute a vlolation of the National Envlronmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act.

Numerous responses in 1992 focused on the watershed and npanan restoration outputs in the Plan. Some commenters wanted more done sooner, and others felt that the need for improvements was a result of poor land management practices

Resolutzon - The reduction in clearcuttmg, which was adopted in response to the even-aged timber management issue, was sufficient to eliminate the potential decline in water quality that bad been predicted in the **draft** Plan. The final Forest Plan includes the use of Best Management Practices, a watershed improvement program, and monitoring of management activities. BMP's were developed by the Forest Service and certified by the State Water Resources Control Board. They were approved by EPA. The appropriate BMP's necessary to protect or improve water quality are identified at the time a specific project is proposed. Monitoringulll assess the effectivenessof **the** Standards and Guidelines, and BMP's to insure a high level of water quality.

The Forest Plan specified 75 acres of watershed improvements per year for two decades, followed by maintenance and minor improvement work at five acres per year indefinitely. An ongoing goal of 20 acres of riparian improvement per year is proposed. **As** explained in the Plan (page 3-37) and FEIS (page 3-87), this restoration work is proposed for existing problems The acre figures were denved from a 1987 Watershed Improvement Needs Inventory. Thesegoals **are minimum** outputs which may be exceeded using cooperative fundingby National Forest fisheries, range, mldlife, and watershed management programs. In some cases, funding and/or work **have** been contnbuted from other Federal and State agencies and from cooperating Organizations and individuals The ongoing Pine Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan is an example of this effort

Project level reconnaissance, stream surveys, and other field work are discovering previously-unrecognized problems. Somerecentland exchanges have also brought damaged streams and watersheds into National Forest ownership. In some cases, better project planning would have prevented the need for such restoration work Good watershed management will be emphasized in future project work. Structural measures, such as headcut stabilizers, check dams, and bank protection, are important to prevent loss of riparian lands and downstream sedimentation. Improving riparian vegetation is a preferred long-term remedy in many cases Restoration work is not proposed as an excuse for future watershed damage by Forest Semce management actions. Some major projects (e.g., utility corridors or hydroelectric dams) may require mitigation measures to offset unavoidable, adverse effects, and some of these measures could include watershed restoration work.

14. **Wild and** Scenic Rivers

Issue - Should the proposed Wdd and Scemc River designations of Mill and Deer Creeks be modified or eliminated? Should Antelope Creek also be recommended for inclusion in the system?

Summary of Public ***Comments*** - About 1,300 comments dealt with Wild and Scemc Rivers Some commenters endorsed extending and/or upgrading the wild and scenic segments of Deer and Mill Creeks. Others requested wild and scemc status for Antelope Creek Still others were opposed to any designations that might interfere unth public access and other actinties

A large majority of the comments received in 1992 on Wild and Scemc Rivers **also** supported increased wild and scenic designations.

Resolution - The proposed Wdd and Scenic River recommendations have been expanded in the final Forest Plan to include Antelope Creek and to extend the recommendation for Mill Creek

upstream to the boundary of Lassen Volcanic National Park. In response to public desires for more recreation facilities, one segment of Deer Creek has been changed from a scenic to a recreational status to retain an existing small campground. A segment of Mill Creek has been similarly changed to allow for an access road to a potential day use recreation site.

An initial forest-wide assessment of potential Wdd and Scenic Rivers was done in the early stages of forest planning. However, the opportunity to re-evaluate rivers and to study rivers not included in the original assessment, such as the Susan River, is still available during the next planning penod. Also, a statement has been added to emphasize coordination with other agencies, and adjacent land owners and managers, in Wild and Scemc River evaluation and management. (See Section E, under Wild and Scenic Rivers, in the "Response to Comments")

16. Wild Horses

Issue - At what population level should the wild horses of the Brushy Mountain Wild Horse Terntory be managed' Would the range condition of the temtory be acceptable?

Summary of Public Comments - Forty-four comments about unld horses were received, all expressing a desire that the Forest continue to maintain a wild horse herd and territory Comments from three organizations expressed concern about the declining population These groups felt that studies need to be conducted to determine the status and health of the herd and, therefore, the cause of the decline. They asked that the population then be managed at a level maintaining vlability and health.

Several commenters expressed concern about the Semi-Primitive Motorized Prescription proposed for part of the territory. They requested wilderness or non-motonzed prescription allocation to minimize disruption of the wild horses. Owners of private land within the temtory questioned the " d d status of the horses, and requested that the Forest Semce assume liability for the unld horses on their land or remove them.

Resolution - The Semi-Primitive Motonzed Prescnption in the Brushy Mountain area has been changed to Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized. A range analysis will be conducted to determine the carrying capacity of the remainder of the territory, and a revised Wild Horse Territory Plan will be developed.

16. Wilderness, Further Planning, Areas, and Roadless Areas

Issue - Which of six areas designated as Further Planning Areas in the 1984 California Wilderness Bill, or portions thereof, should be recommended for wilderness? Which management prescnptions should be assigned to the Further Planning Areas not recommended for unlderness status and to the "released roadless areas?

Summary of Public Comments - About *2,000* comments addressed this issue. They coalesced around these positions: (a) recommending wilderness status for all six former Further Planning Areas and the Chips Creek and Polk Springs roadless areas; (b) enough or too much wilderness already exists and no more is needed; (c) adopting the draft Forest Plan proposal to recommend wilderness status for Heart Lake, Mill Creek, Trail B, and part of Wild Cattle Mountain, and in addition, recommend wilderness status for the Antelope Creek and Soda Rdge areas; (d) not creating new wilderness and to construct OHV trails in the candidate areas; and (e) recommending wilderness status for the Ishi B area in order to protect wild horses.

In 1992, approximately 260 individuals asked for more wilderness and protection of roadless areas. The most popular areas specified for wilderness protection were Ish B, Deer and Mill Creeks, Chips Creek (including Soda Rdge, Squirrel and Cub Creeks) and/or all of the Further Planning Areas Five commenters thought there should be less wilderness, mostly to increase access to the Forest. Most of these comments were general requests, without any significant new information. Specific comments included several requests that the Omon Spnngs Road remain open for vehicle access, and that the road to Big Bend remain closed to include the area in the recommended Mill Creek Wilderness.

Resolution - The unlderness recommendations in the final Forest Plan represent a good balance of wilderness and other resource uses on the Forest Because of this, these recommendations have not

changed from the draft Forest Plan, except for a boundary adjustment in the Trail Lake B area to provlde for exlsting motorized access Of the six former Further Planning Areas, two of them, and portions of two others, are recommended for wilderness status These recommendations complement existing wildernesses in the Forest and in Lassen Volcanic National Park. This would increase the Forest's wilderness acreages from the current 78,060 acres to 99,644 acres, totaling nine percent of the Forest. The other former Further Planning Areas and the 15 unroaded areas are to be managed under a vanety of non-wilderness prescnptions. The purpose of the prescnptions, and the management practices that would be emphasized and permitted under them are described in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan. Appendix M in the FEIS &splays the number of roadless area acres to be managed by the various prescnptions.

Timber harvesting has been scheduled in the first decade of the planning penod for some of the areas now inventoned as roadless. The level of harvest, harvest method, and silvlcultural treatment mll be determined after project planning and NEPA analysis. If the volume scheduled from inventoried roadless areas cannot be achieved, that volume will not be replaced by volume scheduled elsewhere on the Forest.

After consideration of public responses on the proposed **Omon** Springs Road and Blue Lake Canyon area, the management of the N Prescnption within the Red Management Area has been modified (See Section E, under Recreation and Off-Highway Vehicle [OHV] in the "Response to Comments.")

The main Omon Springs Road 31N35 will be managed for dispersed recreation under the Semi-Primitive Motonzed (M) Prescriphon. This change provldes the resource protection needed, alleviates concerns expressed by Lassen Volcanic National Park managers about vehicles encroaching within the Lassen Volcanic Wilderness, and resolves a law enforcement problem. The area is so popular with dispersed recreahonists that the existing gate on the Onion Springs Road is not preventing use.

The Blue Lake Canyon Road has been modified to the Riparian/Fish (F) Prescnption. The intent is to proceed with the wdderness implementation schedule for the Heart Lake Wilderness and, during project planning, determine the need for any access or trailheads in that vicinity Further management concerns for tlus area are best addressed dunng the project planning process.

The decision to re-open the road to Big Bend has not been made as part of the Forest Plan The road to Big Bend will remain closed until such time as the adjacent proposed Mill Creek Wilderness has been designated or rejected by Congress for wilderness status At that time, the decision to re-open the road will be analyzed on a site-specific basis to detemine its potential impact on the integrity of the wdderness.

Inholder access through the Ish Wilderness is currently being analyzed as a result of an appeal of the Ishi Wilderness Implementation Plan, which was issued in 1989. The Forest Plan will be amended to reflect addihonal Goals and Objectives, Standards and Guidelines, and management prescnptions for wilderness. This amendment will provlde direction for inholder access, as well as other management activities, within proposed and existing wildernesses.

B. Economic Efficiency of Alternatives

Each of the four alternatives considered in detail is a combination of resource objectives, outputs, and constraints that portray a certain management scenario. All alternatives were designed to maximize the net value of emphasized priced outputs in relation to costs, while meetmg all specified objectives for non-pnced outputs at the least cost.

In determining the most economically efficient alternative, the Forest Service uses an estimate of present net value, which is the difference between discounted benefits and discounted costs. The PRF Alternative has the third highest present net value (PNV) among the alternatives.

While PNV is a useful comparison of commodity outputs and costs, it is not the only criteria used in selecting the preferred alternative. Other benefits that are not easily measured in the market place, such as water or visual quahty, are also considered. Both priced and non-pnced benefits are used to determme net public benefit whch is an expression of the overall, long-term value to the nation of all outputs and costs. For

the reasons discussed in sections F and G, I find the PRF Altemative to be superior to those alternatives mth hgher present net values.

C. Social and Economic Stability

The Lassen National Forest plays an important role in the social and economic life of the people living in and adjacent to the Forest. Residents of Butte, Lassen, Plumas, Shasta, and Tehama Counties are most affected by Forest activities In addition to envlronmental considerations, factors such as jobs, local government revenues, recreational opportunities, firewood availabihty, the needs of future generations, and social and economic stability were considered in my decision.

Receipts from the Lassen National Forest are expected to be approximately $22 million annually during the planning penod. Smce 1982, receipts have ranged from **$12** million to **$40 million** mth an average of about $30 million. Receipts are generated when the timber is harvested by purchasers and vary in response to market conditions beyond the control of the Forest. Twenty-five percent of these receipts will be divided among Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama Counties according to the acreage of National Forest land located in each.

Forest Plan actinties **will** support, directly and indirectly, over 1,600 jobs annually, a 30 percent decrease from the Current Alternative Lower timber harvests will cause most of this decrease From the standpoint of the five counties affected by Forest activities, this represents a long-term significant impact on the economic base. However, there will be factors that mitigate these impacts over time Under the PRF Altemative, both jobs and receipts will climb steadily until they actually double in the fourth decade Prices for wood products are expected to rise whch would further increase receipts Increasing the rotation age will result in higher prices for harvested trees, especially high-value eastside pine Private timber companies may also increase production above their current levels

The economy in the Susanville area is becoming more diversified over time, one example being the construction of the State pnson and its expansion This, in turn, has led to the growth of other business opporturuties in the area, jobs, and new housing developments A two-year employment forecast for Lassen County calls for moderate growth in the total average employment over the next two years. This increase can be attributed to recovery from the recession and expansion of the State prison. It is estimated that an additional 1,300 jobs will be created due to the prison expansion.

The Department of Agriculture plays a key role in the area of rural development. This was reinforced by the passage of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 whch established the Rural Development Administration (RDA). On December 31, 1991, the new agency became official. Seven RDA multi-state regional offices were opened in October of 1992 The creation of the RDA does not represent a change in existing federal programs. Instead, the new agency will handle certam types of loans and grants formerly assigned to the Farmers Home Administration By specializing, RDA will respond more efficiently to rural America's demand for growth. The RDA Regional office for the Western Region is located in Klamath Falls, Oregon to serve communities in California and other western states, including Alaska and Hawail

Rural **community development programs** received an added boost with the passage of the 1990 Farm Bill. This legdation provides planning and technical assistance, as well as cost sharing of funds, *to* implement projects that lead to economc diversification. Only certain communities and counties are eligible to receive 1990 Farm Bill funds based **on** population cntena. The City of Susanville and Plumas County meet these criteria.

The 1990 **Farm** Bill calls for the establishment of local community action teams to prepare Economic Diversification Plans for eligible areas. The purpose of the Plan is to identify long-term strategies and opporturuties to strengthen local economies currently dependent upon forest resources.

The Lassen National Forest, in conjunction with a cross-section of Lassen County residents, is preparing an Economic Diversification Plan to help mitigate the effect of declining timber harvest levels throughout California The focus of

the Lassen's Economic Diversification Plan is travel and tounsm. Because Plumas County and the Lassen Crossroads Area offer some unique recreation opportunihes, action team members felt there was sufficient potential to promote a year-round tourist industry Under the Forest Service's Rural Community Development program, the City of Susanvllle has already received funding to restore an old railroad depot for use as an interagency visitor center.

It is important to note that the Forest Service's Rural Community Development program cannot fully allevlate the economic impacts associated with lower harvest levels Nor is it a quick fix The expansion of tourism within the impact area of the Lassen National Forest is a long-term investment. The beneficial results of generating employment and income are there, but only to the extent that projects are planned, funded and implemented in a cohesive manner. It will take commitment and cooperation to effect positive economic change.

In addition to the 1990 Farm bill, unemployment compensation, dislocated worker programs, and retraimng programs will somewhat mitigate the problems faced by people out of work due to lower harvest levels The 1982 Job Training Partnership Act, Title 111, provldes job assistance, job development, and job training to help re-employ dislocated workers.

State rural development assistance programs are also available. Community Development Block Grant funds are administered by the State Department of Housing and Community Development. These funds serve three purposes. They provlde 1) low income housmg support, 2) economic assistance for infrastructure development, and 3) planning and technical assistance to eligible jurisdictions Another program is the Rural Economic Development Infrastructure Program which is administered by the State Department of Commerce. This program provides low interest business loans and funds for public utility development to support economic expansion

Local communities within the impact area of the Lassen National Forest are in an economic transition as forest management shifts toward other multiple use emphases besides timber production. All of the National Forests in California are affected by this change. I am aware of the hurt and frustration that accompames this transition from those directly or indirectly affected The reduction in timber supplies from National Forest, State, and even private land is a regional issue

The local timber industry is partially dependent on timber supplies from the Lassen National Forest for the operation of their mills Increased demand for other forest resources and achvlties has now claimed a considerable portion of the land once available for timber management. Through legislation, Congress and the public have let us know that wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and plant and animal diversity are important to them.

This Forest Plan will not satisfy everyone It comes during a time of rapidly changing social values and forest management direction. However, I believe the Plan provides a diverse and sustainable mix of goods and services that benefit all people. Provlding a high level of environmental quality and a variety of recreational opportumties to support tourism will contnbute to the long-run economic health of the area. The short-term economic impacts of a reduced ASQ will be partially offset by higher volumes in later decades Economic diversification will also play an important role in building and maintaining community stability over the long term.

D. Contribution to the Regional Production of Goods and Services

The final Forest Plan serves to adjust the output targets of the 1980 RPA (Resources Planning Act) Program as assigned to the Lassen Nahonal Forest by the Regional Guide. A consideration in selection of the Preferred Alternative is that it protects all resources while providing opportunities for recreation, wldlife habitat improvement, and forage, timber, firewood, and water production needed for local economic growth and stability. The final Forest Plan provldes an appropriate level of all outputs while protecting basic soil, water, wildlife, fishery, and riparian resources and responding to public preferences. It provldes commodity outputs at such a level that amemty values are maintained and enhanced. The Forest Plan does not allow the Forest to meet its share of 1980 RPA goals for such elements as developed recreation, timber sale quantity (an 80 million board feet per year shortfall) and livestock graz-

ing (slightly below target). The Forest Plan exceeds RPA goals for dispersed recreation outputs. Reforestation and timber stand improvement goals are substantially exceeded.

E. Compatibility with Other Public Agency Goals and Plans

The goals and plans of other public agencies whch could be affected by management of the Forest were considered early in the planning process and during the development of the alternatives descnbed in the DEIS The FEIS reflects these considerations along with the comments from public agencies that were received during the two public review periods (see Chapter 10, FEIS; Section IV in the ROD, and "Response to Comments") Where possible, the Forest Plan was modified to accommodate the concerns of these agencies

Federal agencies commentiig on the proposed Plan included the U S Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Semce, the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Interior, and Region IX of the Environmental Protection Agency

State agencies commenting on the proposed Plan included the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Water Resources, Fish and Game, Forestry and Fire Protection; the Central Valley and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and the State Board of Forestry

Local governments and agencies commenting on the proposed Plan included Butte, Lassen, Plumas, Shasta, Sıskıyou, and Tehama counties; the cities of Anderson and Redding; the Redding, Red Bluff-Tehama, Susanville, Los Molinas, Corning, and Anderson Chambers of Commerce; the Shasta County Economic Development Commission, and the Westwood Planning Commission

Summarized below are the changes to the DEIS and draft Plan resultıng from the elected official's and agencies' comments:

A number of these agencies had concerns about the effects of clearcutting on visual resources, water quality, and dwersity of plant and animal populations. In response to these concerns, the final Forest Plan includes less clearcutting than was proposed in the draft Plan The final Plan also includes Standards and Guidelmes that will ensure protection of water quahty and visual resources. The Late Successional and Early Successional Prescriptions, an intensive mldlife management program, and a variety of Standards and Guidelines and monitoring items all contribute to enhancing diverse plant and animal populations Several agencies expressed concern about timber harvest levels. The ASQ in the final Forest Plan is lower than historic levels due to emerging issues and concerns, new information, and changing management direction. Efforts have been made to keep the ASQ as high as possible while meetmg the requirements of the National Forest Management Act and servıng the public.

Maintainıng water quality and protecting riparian areas were also concerns To address them, the Forest Standards and Guidelines for water and ripanan areas have been revised. Intensive watershed rehabilitation is planned, and water and soil momtoring will increase.

Public agency comment on the proposed Plan provided much needed information and solidified proposed coordination efforts. Dialogue ulth Federal agencies, the State of California, local governments, and the interested public, however, will not stop with the approval of the Plan. On-gomg involvement of interested parties is critical to the successful implementation of this Plan, all project plans, and all specific resource plans. As site-spec& planning is done, the Forest will conduct environmental analyses and provide for pubhc involvement

F. Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferable altemative protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources; attains the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation; and achieves a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities All alternatives considered in detail satisfy legal and envlronmental standards (with the exception of the CUR Alternative).

I judge the PRF Alternative to be the environmentally preferable alternative. It emphasizes water quality, wildlife habitat, visual quality, recreation, and wilderness. It maintains a high

standard of diversity in plant and animal populations. It attains the widest range of forest utilization unthout degradation of the environment. It emphasizes the development of recreation facilities and opportunities for tounsm, while continuing to provlde for a sustained level of timber production and other traditional forest uses The public's desire for wood products along with forest amemty values are best balanced in tlus alternative.

Although the EGP Alternative recommends more acres for proposed wlderness and roadless area status, the PRF Altemative has less impact on lands managed for commodity uses. EGP allocates over 3,000 acres per year to group selection harvests, which are small clearcuts averaging two acres in size or less. This necessitates over 3,000 acres per year of artificial methods of regeneration, includmg site preparation, slash burning, and planting EGP impacts the environment by: (1) creating a large number of acres in artificial openings, (2) increasing fragmentation of old growth stands; (3) reducing air quality from slash burning; (4) mcreasing the risk of soil compaction from more frequent entnes into harvest areas.

The PRF Alternative proposes almost the same level of timber harvests unth fewer impacts to the land Although the PRF Altemative allows clearcuttmg when it is the optimum silvicultural method, fewer acres per year would need artificial regeneration than any other alternative This would result in less soil erosion and compaction, less slash burning and associated impacts on air quality, and lower costs to implement. The size of clearcut blocks is limited to an average of 20 acres or less. PRF relies partly on shelterwood cuts, which should regenerate naturally, and on overstory removal/sanitation harvests which leave a residual stand of young trees. Over the next three decades, PRF would harvest fewer acres overall than EGP.

Although EGP elimmates clearcutting, it relies almost exclusively on group selection harvesting. Widespread application of the group selection method has not been tried and needs to be assessed on a smaller scale. Group selection harvests will require more elaborate record-keeping and are more costly to implement that other types of even-aged management. This type of treatment and record-keeping is most successful with the application of a Geographic Information System (GIS). The Forest has limited GIS capabihty at this time.

Another problem of group selection is that many tree species, such as Douglas-fir and Jeffrey pine, are intolerant to shade and grow best m full sunlight. Two acre opemngs could compromise the growth and establishment of these species NFMA requires that naturally occurring plant and animal species be preserved and sustained on a long-term basis. Group selection could lead to large-scale type conversion to true firs and other shade tolerant species For tlus reason, group selection harvesting should be evaluated to gather data on the regeneration success of intolerant timber types. The possibility of partial failure of the system is too high to accept until more experience has been obtained

Land disturbance would be least under the PRF Alternative due to fewer acres harvested and fewer acres needing artificial regeneration Foresters would have a full range of harvest options, including clearcutting, to choose the most appropriate silvicultural prescnption for the stand Vegetative dwersity would be maintamed PRF would cause less fragmentation of forest types, allowing for larger blocks of vegetative cover for wldlife habitat needs.

The PRF Alternative allows herbicide use, while EGP does not. The use of herbicides is approved as a management tool. Herbicides should be considered when alternahve methods are not biologically feasible and are too costly to implement. NFMA requires that stands be fully stocked within five years after harvestmg. On some areas, the application of herbicides may be necessary to achieve this. In addition, depending on the species and site quality, herbicides can greatly enhance the growth rates of young plantations and future yields from regenerated stands The effect of no herbicide use is partly reflected in a lower sustained yield under the EGP Alternative.

I judge the PRF Alternative to provlde a better level of environmental safeguards by reducing the amount of treated acres, by providing for plant and animal diversity, by protecting riparian areas, and by maintaining soil productivity and water quality. It also provides the best balance between the public's need for forest prod-

ucts and desired amenities. Therefore, I have selected the Preferred Alternative as the environmentally preferable alternative.

G. Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative was chosen because it best meets the needs and concerns of the people of the United States, including concerns for environmental quality While other alternatives may be more desirable with respect to a particular activity, output, or resource, none provides a better *mix* of resource benefits and uses while maintaining a healthy and diverse natural environment. The PRF Alternative also responds more positively *to* the issues, concerns and opportunities that were raised by the public throughout the planning process

I did not select the EGP Alternative because it relies almost exclusively on group selection harvesting *to* avoid excessive reduction in the ASQ. The widespread use of group selection needs to be evaluated on a smaller scale first Nor did it respond as well as PRF to the environmental concerns outlined in Section F.

Althongh the TGP Alternative better meets public demand for timber and provides greater economic stability with its higher **ASQ,** it would lead to a reduction in other resource values In the long run, TGP would provide only slightly hgher harvest levels of lower value, smaller diameter trees, and require a higher budget to implement

A limited range of dispersed recreation opportuxuties would be provided by allocating less land to these activities. No additional wildernesses are recommended There are no semi-primitive areas under the TGP Alternative. Only those portions of Mill and **Deer** Creeks that lie within the Ishi Wilderness are proposed for Wild and Scenic River status

I did not select the CUR Alternative because NFMA requirements for maintaining viable populations of all native and desirable non-native species can not be met over the long term. Recent scientific evidence indicates that our current management practices may lead *to* a critical reduction of habitat for late successional species **CUR** proposes **5,900** acres of regeneration harvesting each year, most of which will be clearcut and planted. Specific habitat areas for fisher and marten are not identified, putting population, viability at risk.

There are no recommended wildernesses or Wild and Scexuc Rivers in the CUR Alternative No semi-primtive areas are allocated for dispersed recreation opportunities. There would be no increase in developed recreation facilities.

My reasons for selecting the Preferred Alternative are described below. They reflect my commitment *to* applying the principles of ecosystem management, expressed in the Chiefs letter of June **4, 1992,** and stewardship first, expressed in my statement of March **5,1992.**

Preservation and Protection

Preservation refers to land that is managed primanly to preserve unique ecosystems, species of fish, mldlife and plants, cultural resources, and wild and scenic characteristics for the indefinite future. The final Plan manages the following areas or resources under a preservation strategy:

Wilderness - the Preferred Alternative recommends 21,584 acres for proposed wilderness This will bring the total wilderness acres on the Forest *to* **99,644.**

Wzld and Scenic - three rivers totaling 76 miles are recommended for proposed Wild and Scenic River designation

Research Natural Areas - two Research Natural Areas are already established on the Forest. ***Six*** additional RNAs are proposed in the final Plan, bringing the Forest total to **14,300** acres. Research Natural Areas are areas set aside in perpetuity as baselines of natural ecological conditions and change.

Special Interest Areas - seven Special Interest Areas are established totaling 2,300 acres. Special Interest Areas include areas of unusual or outstanding botanical, aquatic, scenic, geological, zoological, cultural or other unique charactenstics that ment special attention and management.

Semi-Pnmitiue Areas - 65,000 acres will provide a full range of dispersed recreation opportunities. Timber\ harvests are not scheduled for lands managed under a semi-primitive prescnption

Visual Resources - suitable timber land managed under the View/Timber prescription totals 168,000 acres. This prescnption applies to major highway corridors, trails, and recreation areas. Activities such as timber harvesting, range management, and mineral development will be managed to preserve the vlsual quality objectives for these sensitive areas

Sod **and** Water Resources - Forest Standards and Guidelines, the Riparian/Fish Prescription, and mitigation measures such as streamside management zones preserve soil productivlty and waterquahty. No timber management ulll occur in streamside management zones except where riparian values are maintained or enhanced Streamrehabilitation and fisheries improvement projects ulll continue.

Sensitive Plants - there are **12** known Sensitive plants and ten other plant species unth low population numbers which may occur on the Forest The final Plan calls for the identification and protection of all Sensitive plants to ensure their viability.

Fire and Fuels Management - A key **to** preserving forested environments is the appropriate management of wildfire and fuels. In the final Plan, prescnbed fire will be used for fuel reduction and to meet other resource objectives such as wildlife habitat improvement Fuels management objectives will be incorporated in project planning for other activities.

Cultural Resources - Forest Standards and Guidelines provide for the preservation of cultural properties on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places Where protection of cultural properties is not feasible, the values that result in their eligibility for inclusion on the National Register wlll be recovered.

Air **Quality** - Forest Standards and Guidelines specify that management actions will meet or exceed legal requirements of all levels of government.

Biodiversity

Maintaining diverse ecosystems, including the diversity of plants, fish, wildlife, and vegetabve age classes, is **a** primary objective of the final Plan. Key elements of the PRF Alternabve that provide for biodiversity are:

Wildlife Habitat Areas - habitat areas have been estabhshed for spotted owls, marten, fisher and goshawks Many of these areas overlap with each other to reduce the effect on the ASQ Spotted owl, marten, and fisher habitat areas have been declared unsuitable for timber management until more information is available about the requirements of these species, and exlsting habitat conditions improve. Limited timber management may occur in goshawk territories. All of these species are listed as Sensitive with the exception of the northern spotted owl, which is listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Viable Populations - The Forest Plan provides Standards and Guidelines to maintain vlable populations of plant and animal species. For some wldlife species, like spotted owls and goshawks, population goals are given **to** ensure their viability.

Vegetative Diversity - a minimum of five percent of each Management Area **wlll** be managed for old growth retention. Management Area Standards and Guidelines also list the minimum acreages **to** be provlded in each successional stage for the area's major vegetative types

Forest Productivity

The final Forest Plan will provide for continued consumption of natural resources while maintaining goals for preservation and biodiversity Components of the Plan that provide for development are:

hmber - The ASQ is 96 **MMBF** which does not include non-chargeable volume from unsuitable timber land Timber harvesting is scheduled over **596,341** acres of suitable land, an average of 9,500 acres will be treated each year. This includes **an** eshmated 1,600 acres of clearcutting, 1,000 acres of shelterwood, 500 acres of group selecbon, 900 acres of stand maintenance, and 5,500 acres of commercial thinnings/salvage per year. Timber will be harvested by both even-aged and uneven-aged systems. The reduction in the ASQ from previous years is necessary to achieve other Forest objectives for preservation and biodiversity,

Although the timber harvest level and associated employment for the PRF Alternative would be the second lowest among the four alternatives **in**

the first decade, the ASQ increases to 113 MMBF per year by the fifth decade This is compared to 94 MMBF for EGP and 124 MMBF for TGP Total returns to the Treasury and timber related employment also increase by the fifth decade. In addition, the benefit/cost ratio is higher with PRF than with either EGP or TGP.

Recreation Use - Recreation and tourism opportunities will be increased with additional campground and trail construction. Proposed wilderness, proposed Wild and Scenic Rivers, and semi-pnmitive areas will also provide more opportumties for dispersed recreation Amemty values will be mamtained orenhanced. Although recreation opportunities only partially offset the loss of timber-related jobs, they will contribute to community stability over the long-term by providing an attractive quality setting to promote tourism.

Livestock ***Grazing*** - there unll be a shght decrease in livestock grazing levels (two percent) from current use Actual use levels will be determined with the preparation of allotment management plans The Forest's range program will emphasize range productivity and rehabilitation of heavily used nparian areas Transitory range, created by timber harvest or fire, will increase under the PRF Alternative.

Wildlife and ***Fzsh Use*** - consumptive use of fish will increase with habitat and npanan zone improvements Non-consumptive use of wildlife (nature study, viewing) will also increase. Consumptive use (hunting, trapping) of wildlife is expected to remain at present levels. The final Plan includes deer habitat improvements such as prescribed burning 1,300 acres annually These improvements are designed to increase deer population levels over the long term.

Minerals - mining will be supported where it is compatible with other resource management objectives

Lands - the lands resource includes utility corridors, special uses, land withdrawals, rights-of-way, and land line location. The Plan supports sustainable development by making land available for utility corridors, special uses, electronics sites, and other appropnate land uses.

The PRF Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative. It reflects more than any other, the broad range of pubhc desires that were expressed in the issue identification process, and in the review of the DEIS and draft Plan as well as the proposed final Plan. It responds to emerging issues. Although it is not the alternative with the highest PNV, the PRF Alternative does provide an appropriate mix of commodity outputs in an economical manner, while maintaining or enhancing amenity values. Forest Standards and Guidelines, Management Prescriptions, Management Area Direction, and a comprehensive monitoring program will ensure that the natural environment is protected as the PRF Alternative is implemented.

I select the PRF Alternative because, in my judgement, it maximizes net public benefit. The term "net public benefit" is inherently subjective, as many Forest outputs and effects have a qualitative value that is not easily measured. Many people may disagree unth this evaluation, and therein he the controversies. I have shared with you, the reader, the factors I considered before selecting the PRF Alternative. Among the four alternatives studied in detail, the PRF Alternative promises the greatest long-term benefit to the public and the natural environment.

V. MITIGATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Mitigation measures will minimize or eliminate potential conflicts or adverse effects of implementation. The Standards and Guidelines, and Management Prescriptions in the Forest Plan, Chapter 4, are fundamental and integral part of these measures. They were developed through an interdisciplinary effort, and incorporate agency as well as federal, State, and local requirements to mitigate or eliminate any long-term effect of forest use. Additional mitigation measures unll be developed and implemented at the project level.

To the best of my knowledge, all practical mitigation measures have been adopted Land use allocations also play an important role in mitigation through the separation of incompatible uses

The ability of the Forest to produce the resource benefits and uses specified in the Plan is dependent upon a monitonng and evaluation program The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation program is three-fold (1) to determine if the Forest Plan is being implemented as designed, (2)

to determine if implementation is meeting the Forest Plan objectives; and (3) to determine if the initial assumptions used to develop the Forest Plan were correct

Momtonng is intended to keep the Forest Plan current and responsive *to* change Momtonng and evaluation each have a distinctly different purpose and scope. Monitonng consists of data gathenng, observations, and mformation. During evaluation, the data and mformation are analyzed and interpreted This process allows determination of whether conditions are within the bounds and intent of Plan direction Forest Plan momtoring is not a subshtute for exlsting monitonng activities Many actinties are currently being monitored on the Forest to comply with administrative and legal responsibilities

Momtoring and evaluahon will provide information to'

Compare planned to applied management Standards and Guidelines to determine if objechves are achieved [36 CFR 219.12(k)];

Quantitatively compare planned versus actual outputs and services [36 CFR 219.12 (k)(1)];

Measure effects of prescriptions, including significant changes in land productivity [36 CFR 219.12 (k)(2)];

Determine planned costs versus actual costs associated with carrying out prescriptions [36 CFR 219.12 (k)(3)];

Determine population trends of the management indicators species and relationship to habitat changes [36 CFR 219 19(a)(6)];

Evaluate effects of National Forest management on adjacent land, resources, and communities [36 CFR 219.7 (f)];

Identify research needs to support or improve National Forest management [36 CFR 219 281;

Determine if lands are adequately restocked [36 CFR 219.12 (k)(5)(i)];

Determine, at least every 10 years, if lands identified as unsuitable for timber production have become suitable [(36 CFR 219.12(k)(5)(ii)]; and

Determine whether maximum size limits for harvest areas should be continued [36 CFR 219 12(k)(5)(iii)]

Results of evaluations will lead to the followmg types of decisions:

Continue practice, no change necessary;

Refer the problem to the appropnate Forest officer for corrective action,

Modify the management practice through Plan amendments;

Revise output schedules;

Revise unit output costs; or

Revise the Plan.

Evaluation of results of the site-specific monitoring program will be documented in an annual Forest momtoring report prepared by an interdisciplinary team. This report will be available for public review.

VI. PLANNING RECORDS, AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW.

A. Planning Records

Planning records contain the detailed information used, and records of the decisions made, in developing the Forest Plan and EIS as reqmred in 36 CFR 219.12. Documentation detailing the Forest planning process is available for inspection during the regular business hours at:

Forest Supervisor's Office
Lassen National Forest
55 South Sacramento Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(916) 257-2151

These records are incorporated by reference into the final Plan and FEIS.

B. Amendments and Revisions

The National Forest Management Act requires revision of the Forest Plan at least every 15 years The Plan may be revised sooner if physical conditions or demands on the land and resources have changed sufficiently to affect the overall goals or uses for the Forest When revising the Forest Plan, all the procedures set forth m 36 CFR 219.12 will be followed; this mcludes scoping, an analysis of the management situation, formulation of alternatives, an estimation of effects, an evaluation of alternatives, identification of a preferred alternative, documentation in a DEIS and proposed Forest Plan, and formal public comment before approval and implementation of a revised plan.

I approve significant amendments to the Forest Plan, while the Forest Supervisor has the authority to approve non-significant amendments after appropnate pubhc notice and comphance with NEPA. The determination of significance shall be made in accordance with the requirements of 16 USC 1604(f), 36 CFR 219.10(e), and (f), 36 CFR 219 12(k), and pertinent sections of the Forest Semce Manual and Handbook.

C. Right to Administrative Review

This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with the provlsions of 36 CFR 217. Two copies of the Notice of Appeal must be in writing and submitted to:

Dale Robertson, Chief
Forest Semce - Appeals
USDA Auditors Building
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Notice of Appeal must be filed within 90 days from the date this decision was published in the legal notice section of the Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, California

The Notice of Appeal must include sufiicient narrative evidence and rationale to show why this decision should be changed or reversed [36 CFR 217.91. As a minimum, a written Notice of Appeal filed with the Reviewing Officer must:

(I) State that the document is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR Part 217;

(2) List the name, address, and telephone number of the appellant,

(3) Identify the decision about whch the appellant objects;

(4) Identify the document about which the decision is contained by title and subject, date of the dension, and name and title of the Deciding Officer.

(5) Identify specifically that portion of the decision or dension document to whch the requester objects;

(6) State the reasons for objecting, including issues of fact, law, regulahon, or policy, and if apphcable, specifically how the decision violates law, regulation, or pohcy; and

(7) Identify the specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks [36 CFR 217.91

Requesting to stay the approval of this Land and Resource Management Plan shall not be granted [36 CFR 217.10(b)].

The Forest Plan includes recommendations that two percent of the Forest, or 21,584 acres, be designated as wdderness. This is a preliminary administrative recommendation, which will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Semce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. The Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wlderness designation Therefore, this wldemess recommendation is not appealable under the agency's administrative appeal procedures. The same is true of the recommendations for Mill Creek, Deer Creek, and Antelope Creek for Wild and Scenic Rivers

Recommendations for RNA designation of the Graham Pinery, Green Island Lake, Indian Creek, Mayfield, Soda Ridge, and Timbered Crater areas are also not appealable, as only the Chief of

the Forest Service can make the decision to designate an RNA.

No decisions on site-specific projects are made in this document, although a number of projects are identified. Those projects idenhfied in vanous parts of the Forest Plan or final FEIS are only included to show that Forest Plan Goals and Objectives can be acheved. Final decisions on site-specific projects ulll be made dunng implementation of the Forest Plan after appropriate NEPA analysis and documentation Parties dissatisfied with a specific project should appeal the site-specific decision once it is made

I encourage anyone concerned about the Forest Plan or Envlronmental Impact Statement to contact the Forest Supervisor at 55 South Sacramento Street, Susanvllle, California **96130** or at **(916) 257-2151** before submitting an appeal. It may be possible to resolve your concern in a less formal way.

Ronald E. Stewart

Ronald E. Stewart
Regional Forester

JAN 1 11993
Date

END OF PHYSICAL FILE